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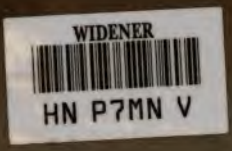

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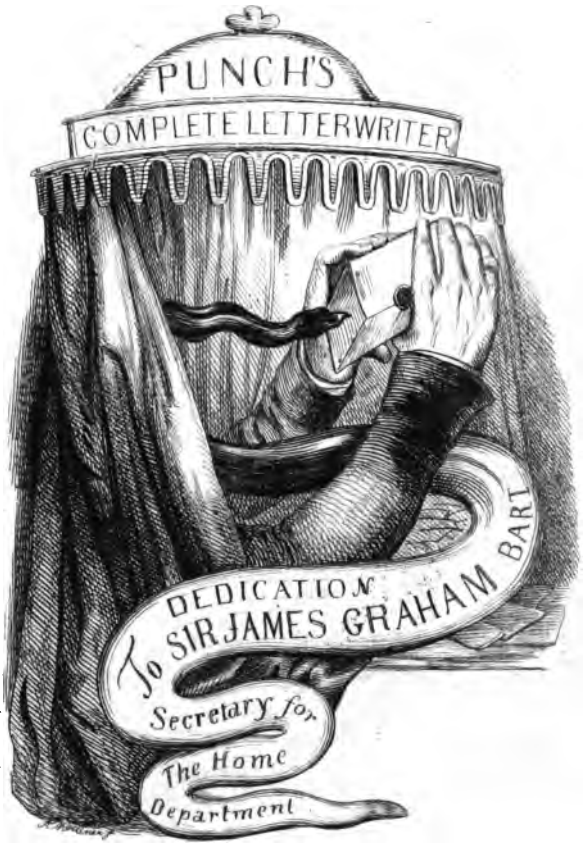

PHILADELPHIA.

CAREY & HART.

1844.

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THE

COMPLETE

LETTER WRITER.

BY "PUNCH,"

Douglas William Jerrold

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEECH AND OTHERS.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY AND HART.

1844.

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TO SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

My Dear Sir James:

Having, as I modestly believe, written a Complete Letter-Writer—yes, having penned some fifty models of epistolary correspondence, involving all the affections, interests, rights, wrongs, and courtesies of social life—I am naturally anxious to obtain for the work the protecting countenance of a high, appropriate name. Your official privilege makes you, in truth, the very interesting object I have sometime looked for with increasing despair. I confess it; I desponded lest I should fail to obtain a patron whose natural genius and finely educated taste would immediately appreciate in my labour the manifold heart-touches, the subtleties of style, with—greater glory than all that—practical golden wisdom, without which the very finest writing is little more than the very finest glass-blowing.

A mere high title at the head of a Dedication is a piece of pompous lumber. In the shallowness of our judgment, we bestow a humiliating pity on the forlorn savage who lays his offering of fruits and flowers before his wooden idol with a formidable name; an idol certainly with gold rings in its nose and ears, and perhaps an uncut diamond in its forehead; but nevertheless, an insensible block. The fruits shrivel and rot; the flowers die a death of profitless sweetness; for the idol has no gustatory sense—no expanding nostril. I say, we pity the poor, darkened fool, who may have risked his limbs for cocoa-nuts, who may have tempted the whole family of mortal snakes, groping

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his way through woods, scrambling up ravines to gather flowers, and only to lay the hard winnings of his toil before a stock, a stone, that cannot even so much as wink a thankfulness for such desperate duty done.

And what shall we say of the author who, choosing a patron merely for his titles—for the gold rings in his nose and ears, and certainly not for the diamond in his head—lays before him a book for which the poor creature has not the slightest relish? He is incapable of tasting its deliciousness. Its most sapid morsels lie in his mouth like bran. He chews and chews a prime cut, yea the very pope's-eye of philosophy, as it were chopped hay. I bestow ink upon no such man. And thou, sagacious and therefore pacific goose, still enjoy thy common right; still with snaky neck search the short grass—still, with fixed and meditating look, eye man askance—I disturb thee not; I rifle not thy wing of its gray wealth to nib a pen for such a patron.

But hither, hither, ye sprites and genii—old visitants of dimmest garrets—ye who have made the musty air musical with your quivering pinions, and with kindly conjurations given state to stateless kings, who, from their attic thrones, rule the thankless and despising world beneath—hither ye, who from the phials of hope have sweetened the bitterness of the present,—who first did crown the poet in his solemn solitude, and—no illusion but sweetest truth!—made him see in every growing line a grove of budding laurel—made him with a shuddering glee hear the far-off praises of the future, even as men hear the distant music of a coming triumph! Hither, hither, ye Parnassian fays, and bring me ink—bright ink—odorous ink—ink made in the deep recesses of some Indian wood, dark as night, yet fragrant as the morn.

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Well done. It is black and liquid as a black eye smiling sweet mischief on unconscious man. And now, boys, a pen! Stay! know ye the vicarage of Purplecloth? It is a fruitful nook, where there is an hourly struggle between the rector and his geese which shall be the fattest, man or birds. Hie ye there, and straightway choose the primest goose. Kill him: yet kill him quickly—humanely, singing some sacrificial melody the while. He will give up his quills serenely, quietly as a dying laureat. When the goose is dead, take care that the creature be properly buried; to which end, I charge ye give his body to the poor.

So! An errand quickly done. Here is pen and ink. As for paper—no matter; out of the most beautiful, yet costly bravado, I will write my Dedication on the back of a £50 note, which—the words enshrined in type—be it known, remains the perquisite of the printer. May he make the most he can of it! And now to begin my dedication in good earnest.

MY DEAR SIR JAMES:

I perceive from the works of those daily law-breakers, the reporters of Parliamentary speeches, that you have the right—a right solemnized by law—to burglariously break and enter into every package, bundle, letter, note, or billet-doux, sent through the Post-office. Yes; you are permitted this high privilege by the Act of 1 VICTORIA, whom GOD preserve.

I protest, SIR JAMES, that henceforth I shall never think of that crowning pile of St. Martin's-le-Grand, without seeing you in imagination working away with a crow-bar, smashing red and black wax—or, by the more subtle

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agency of steam, softening wafers, that the letter may open its lips, and yield up the contents of its very heart to the Secretary of the Home Department.

I am not a squeamish creature, SIR JAMES. I have not what is called by the world false modesty: a modesty, I presume, to be classed with false ringlets and false teeth, and therefore never used but when the real thing is wholly departed. No; I have seen too much of the world to care a great deal for its turned-up noses and the ugly mouths it may make at me. Nevertheless, SIR JAMES, there is a point between philosophy and apathy. Yes; the rhinoceros has his tender part—I have mine: so tender, and withal so vital, that I cannot get rid of it. Were I, like ACHILLES, vulnerable only in one heel, I would instantly cheat fate of its malice, have my limb amputated, and laugh securely at destiny on a wooden leg. This, SIR JAMES, I would do: but a man cannot take the weak parts of his heart away as dexterously as a careful housewife removes the fly-blow from meat. Hence my complaint.

My *one* weakness—(for weaknesses, strangely enough, are like wives; no man, whatever the truth may be, thinks it proper to own to more than one at a time,)—my *one* weakness is a disgust, a horror, that any man should dare to profane the sanctity of my letters! I know not—for if a man can save a bit of self-flattery out of his weakness, it is so much virtue got, as one may say, out of the fire—I know not if this aversion may not, in some degree, arise from my love of mankind, and, consequently my annoyance at seeing it in a paltry, pitiable condition, pushing its brazen nose where only its brass can protect it. Be this as it may; when I learned this morning that you, SIR JAMES, made yourself a sort of horse or ass-hair seive, through which the correspondences of men were passed,

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that, if there, the daggers, pikes, and pistols of the writers might be duly deposited in the state vessel appointed to detect them—I confess it, I felt in a paroxysm of passion, for the proper expression of which no words have as yet been fashioned.

And for this just reason. I knew that my name was too much noised in the world to escape even the ears of Cabinet Ministers. Hence, I felt assured that my letters—and the thousands I receive!—had all of them been defiled by the eyes of a spy; that all my most domestic secrets had been rumpled and touzled, and pinched here and pinched there—searched by an English Minister as shuddering modesty is searched at a French custom-house! My first feeling, SIR JAMES, was intense indignation; and then I vehemently slapped my breast; and so, giving the virtue a jerk, pity came uppermost.

Then I thought—how can I and SIR JAMES ever meet again? When we met, I was wont to don a crimson waistcoat, worked with all sorts of impossibilities in gold; to wear a court coat of cut chocolate velvet, and silk stockings shining like glass. Knowing that the vulgar were taken by such things, I always went among Cabinet Ministers, drest to the amazement even of tailors. SIR JAMES, you know my secret, and how in that dress can we meet again? Deny it not; you must know it, for you have read MR. NATHAN'S letters long before they came to my unconscious hand, letters demanding of me, I will not take upon myself to say how many times, payment for the hire of that crimson waistcoat and chocolate velvet coat. This is one case; I might cite a hundred.

At length, I took comfort. A true chemist will extract sugar even from the cudgel he has been beaten with. SIR JAMES has, I thought, ill-used me, but nevertheless, from

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his very shabbiness will I extract the sweets of patronage. I will dedicate to him my "Complete Letter-Writer;" and for this reason—a reason stringent as an iron hoop.

As Sir James Graham has the whole run of the Post-office—as he has the unquestioned fingering of all the letters of the Queen's subjects—he cannot but possess a most refined, most exquisite taste, for the graces of epistolary composition. Yes; he, above all men, from his large reading of the subject, will take and hug to his bosom—if Ministers own such physical vulgarities—Punch's Complete Letter Writer. He will appreciate its many-coloured style; he will acknowledge it as a work to supersede all works of the sort hitherto written; he will—perhaps in his place in Parliament, and so save a considerable sum in the way of advertisements—declare of the book, that no family should be without it; and that every gentleman's library, having all else, yet wanting it, has nothing!

Therefore, Sir James, it is with the profoundest opinion of your experienced ability to judge the surpassing merits of the volume—a volume for the world—take Punch's Complete Writer is dedicated to you,

By your Old Acquaintance,

PUNCH.

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NOTICE.

St. Martin's-le-Grand, July 19th.

EMPERORS, Kings, Princes, Grand Dukes, Viceroys, Popes, Potentates, Infants, Regents, Barons, and Foreign Noblemen in general, are respectfully announced that, on and after the present month, the following alterations will take place in the opening of letters:—

Letters posted at	Opened at
9 A.M.	10 A.M.
10 A.M.	11 A.M.
12	2 P.M.
2 P.M.	4 P.M.
4 P.M.	6 P.M.

Copies of letters opened will be despatched the same evening, and every information afforded as to the address of suspected parties.

A Polish and Italian translator is now permanently engaged, and a choice assortment of foreign seals has lately been added to the extensive collection.

Greater dexterity practised since the recent disclosures.

*** *No increase in the prices.*

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PUNCH'S

COMPLETE LETTER WRITER.

LETTER I.

From a Lady, inquiring the Character of a Servant.

MADAM,

Bridget Duster having applied to me for a place of maid-of-all-work, I beg to learn of you, as her last mistress, her fitness for the serious responsibilities of that situation. Having suffered so much from the impertinence and wickedness of servants—(I have often thought they were only sent into this world to torment respectable people)—you will, I am sure, forgive me if I appear somewhat particular in my inquiries. Experience, madam, has made me circumspect. There was a time when I thought all the world as good and honest as myself; but housekeeping wipes the bloom from the human heart, and makes us lock our tea-caddies.

I have kept house for five-and-twenty years, in which time I have constantly endeavoured to find a servant who should be without a fault; yet, though I have given eight pounds a year with tea and sugar—would you believe it?—I have never once succeeded. However, I must say it, I like the face of Bridget; I never saw a deeper small-pox. As for handsome servants, I never have 'em: they always think more of their faces than their fire-irons, and are puckering up their mouths at the looking-glass when they should be rubbing the door-plate. Curls, too, I never suffer to cross my threshold. I know more than one instance in which curls have destroyed the peace of a family. For my money, a servant can't be too plain: in a word, I think ugliness to be a sort of cheap livery intended by nature

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for maids-of-all-work—it keeps 'em in their proper place, and prevents 'em thinking of foolishness. So far, Bridget's looks are most satisfactory.

And now, ma'am, for the article of dress. Servants have never been servants since linsey-woolsey went out. It makes my very flesh creep to see 'em flaunting about, for all the world as if they were born to silk gowns and open-work in their stockings. I *have* seen a housemaid go out for the day with a parasol! I prophesied her end, and—poor wretch!—so it came about. What I have suffered, too, from such presumption! I once had a creature who copied every new cap I had, violating my best feelings under my own roof! Bridget looks like a humble dresser, fit for a kitchen; I trust she is so.

I hope, however, she is sober. When servants are very plain, they sometimes, to revenge themselves on nature, fly to drink. This is shocking; for with such people, with all one's locking and bolting, one's brandy is never safe.

In the next place, does Bridget break? Not but what I always make my servants pay for all they destroy; still, they can't pay for one's nerves. Again, there is this danger—they may break beyond their wages.

Is Bridget honest? Pray, madam, be particular on this point, for I have been much deceived. I once took a servant with the finest character for honesty; and, only a week afterwards, detected her giving three cold potatoes to a little hurdy-gurdy foreigner with white mice.

Is Bridget civil? Will she bear wholesome reproof? A servant who answers is my abomination. It is clearly flying in the face of the best interests of society. Surely, people who pay wages have a right to find what fault they please; it is the natural privilege that marks the mistress from the maid. I would have a severe law to punish a servant who answers—even if right.

Is Bridget an early riser, without any reference to the time she may be allowed to go to bed? A good maid-of-all-work should, so to speak, be like a needle, and always sleep with one eye open.

Has Bridget any followers? Such creatures I never

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allow. I conceive that a servant ought to be a sort of nun, and, from the moment she enters your house, should take leave of all the world besides. Has she not her kitchen for willing hands always to do something in? And then for company, doesn't she see the butcher, the baker, the dustman—to say nothing of the sweeps?

Is Bridget industrious—is she clean? I hope, for the poor creature's sake, that you may be able to answer these few questions to my satisfaction, when Bridget may immediately bring her boxes. With me, her duties will be few, but they must be punctually performed. Indeed, I require a servant to consider herself a sort of human kitchen clock. She must have no temper, no sulks, no flesh-and-blood feelings, as I've heard impudent hussies call their airs and graces, but must go as regularly through her work as though she was made of steel springs and brass pullies. For such a person, there is a happy home in the house of

Your obedient Servant,

PAMELA SQUAW.

LETTER II.

From a Servant, inquiring the Character of a Mistress.

DEAR MOLLY,

Finding that you're in place next door to Mrs. Squaw, and remembering what friends we used to be when both of us lived with the pastry cook, I have thought fit to write to you to inquire about your neighbour. It's all very fine, Molly, for mistresses to haggle about the characters of their maids, but surely we poor servants have as much right to ask the characters of our mistresses. However, folks who pay wages will always have the upper hand in this world, whatever, to our comfort, may happen to 'em afterwards.

I thank my stars I don't judge of people by their looks, otherwise I wouldn't go into Mrs. Squaw's kitchen, if it was made of gold; she's dreadful ugly, to be sure, but I

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don't despise her for that, if her temper's sweet. I can't bear a mistress that's always nagging and nagging. A good noise, once in a way, I don't mind—it brisks up one's blood; but I have known mistresses always pushing their words at you and about you, as if they were sticking pins in a cushion with no flesh and blood.

How does she like her maids to dress? Mind, I don't insist on ringlets *in* the house, but when I go out, I'm my own mistress. I've given up two places for my bird-of-paradise feather—it looks quite alive in my white chip!—and would give up twenty. After slaving among pots and pans for a month, it is so sweet to be sometimes taken for a lady on one's Sunday out.

And now, dear Molly, tell me truly; does Mrs. Squaw drink? I have lived in one family where the mistress kept a bottle in a thing that looked for all the world like the covering of a book. No wages should make me do this again; and—perhaps I am wrong—but, looking at Mrs. Squaw, I thought I never saw a redder nose. When a mistress has such a habit, a poor girl's character is never safe.

I've agreed to pay for all I break, but that I don't mind, as I never break nothing—it's always the cat. But then I've known mistresses mean enough to put off a cracked basin on a poor servant. What is Mrs. Squaw's character for crockery?

Mrs. Squaw asked me if I had any followers, as she allowed of no such thing. I said—and truly, Molly—that I had nobody that followed *me;* but, Molly, there is a young man that *I* have followed these two years, and will, so long as I have eyes to stare and limbs to move. Such a sweet creature—six feet one inch and a half without his boots! Such a mustachio on his lip—such a delicate thing, just the colour of a leech! He's in the Life Guards, Molly; quite a building of a man. You can't think how fond he is of me; for these last two years he's smoked my wages in cigars. I lost one place about him, and gloried in it! It was one quarter-day, and he came whistling about the area. Mistress saw his red coat, and ringing the bell, asked me what I meant by harbouring a low soldier?

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My blood was up like ginger-beer. "It's all very well for you, ma'am," says I, "to say low soldier. But, ma'am," says I, "you don't know what it is to be courted by a Life Guardsman."

O! these mistresses, Molly! they think poor servants have no more flesh and blood than a porridge-skillet. They can have their comfortable courtings in their parlours and drawing-rooms; and then, with their very toes at the fire, they can abuse a poor servant for only whispering a bit of love, all among the snow, perhaps, in the area. This is the treatment that often makes poor girls desperate, and drives 'em to marriage long afore their time.

No followers, indeed! No; they think that the cat and the kettle, and the kitchen clock, are company enough for a poor servant. They never think of us in the long winter nights, when they are playing at cards, or chatting with folks who've dropt in—they never think of us, all alone as we are, without a soul to speak to! No; we must have no followers, though, perhaps, the parlour's ringing again with laughter; and our only chance of opening our lips is the chance of being sent out to get oysters for the company.

However, dear Molly, write me all you know about the character of Mrs. Squaw: if she's sober, and gives civil words, and regular wages to her servants, I don't mind having her for a mistress, until the sweet day arrives when I shall become a soldier's wedded lady. Till then,

Believe me, your friend and old fellow-servant,

BRIDGET DUSTER.

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LETTER III.

From a Gentleman to a Friend, soliciting his Acceptance and Bond.

My dear Richards,

In this our fleeting life, how few are the opportunities afforded us of really testing the hearts of our friends! Sorry, indeed, should I be for my own nature, were I of the barren creed of those who, from the depths of their would-be wisdom, smile knowingly at friendship, as though, like the word '*phœnix*,' it spoke of something very fine, but very fabulous: a spicy monster, building in the clouds, and never known to descend upon our earth. No: I should be amongst the most insensible of my kind—a very savage of social life—did I fail to worship friendship in my innermost heart as a virtue illustrated by one of the noblest of created men. Forgive me if I do not name him; for true worth, like the rose, *will* blush at its own sweetness!

Truly, it is pleasant to hear men abuse the world, as though, forsooth, they themselves were the only shining

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THE POST-OFFICE PEEP-SHOW.—"A Penny a Peep—Only a Penny!"

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exceptions from the general selfishness they condemn. When I hear a man cry out, "It is a bad world," I must, of course, lump him with the aggregate iniquity; for how can he have the enormous vanity to select himself as the one pure Adam from naughty millions? No, RICHARDS; be it my faith to think the best of the world; be it my special felicity to know that I hold the heart—ay, as though it were in my hand—of the truest and the best of friends. But what, indeed, is friendship, if it be not active? What, but a harp, or the divinest of Cremonas, resting in silence—all the melodious, ravishing sounds that waft our spirits to the clouds, sleeping in their strings, a dumb sleep? So is it with the heart of a true friend until touched by the wants of his companion.

My dear RICHARDS, I enclose you a bill for a hundred and fifty pounds. That bill, like the harp or fiddle I have spoken of, is now as a dead thing. But only write across it "Accepted, JOHN RICHARDS," and it will have a voice of gold—yes it will ring with sovereigns. Oh, friendship! thou divinest alchemist, that man should ever profane thee! Send the bill back by post, as I *must* have the cash to-morrow.

I have many acquaintances, any of whom would have gone through the little form (for it is only a form,) I ask of you. But no: I should have thought such an act on my part a treason to our friendship. You know, my dear boy, that I am apt to be imaginative; and thus, it is a sweet and peculiar pleasure to me to fancy both our names linked indissolubly together—the union legalized by a five-shilling stamp—each adding value to the other by being paired. Thus, it almost seems to me, that we merge two souls into one—that in very truth, by the potent spell of friendship, we are no longer single, but bound together by a bond unknown to those pagans of the ancient time, ORESTES and PYLADES, DAMON and PYTHIAS!

Yes; with a slight flourish of the pen, we shall feel what I once thought impossible, a greater interest in one another. We shall know that our names, written upon accredited paper, pass in the world as symbols of gold; you will have turned ink-drops into ready money, and *I*

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shall have received it. The roses that wreathe around the stamp are, to my mind's eye, RICHARDS, the very types of our kindred minds. Do not, however, fail to post the bill to-night.

There is—I believe he calls it—a bond on my account for three or four hundreds to which a troublesome attorney wants your name. Come and breakfast with me on Monday, my dear boy, and it shall be ready for you. Heaven bless you—

Your friend, to the Place of Tombs,
MONTAGUE ST. GEORGE.

P. S. I have a *pâté de foie gras*, which I don't think you ever tasted, from Paris, for Monday. It's made of geese's-liver. They put the live goose before the fire and make it drink and drink. Rather cruel, but there's no mistake in the liver.

LETTER IV.

The Friend's Answer, refusing both Acceptance and Bond.

MY DEAR MONTAGUE,

Your letter has given me great pleasure. You know how highly I have always thought of friendship: it is, as you say, a divine thing. Indeed, to my mind so divine, that it should never, no never, be mixed up with money.

Nevertheless, however we may differ on this little point, it is impossible for me to speak as I feel on your letter It is charmingly written. There is a beauty, a fervour in your sentiments about friendship that convince me you have felt its treasures, and are, therein, though poor in the world's esteem, rich as an Emperor. My dear friend, cultivate this style of writing: I am certain money is to be made by it.

I agree with you as to your opinion of the world; it is a glorious world—and glorious, indeed, are some of the people in it. The friendship that has so long subsisted

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between us, must make me acknowledge this. Your simile of a friend and a fiddle is perfect and touching. What, indeed, are they both made for, if not to be played upon?

Your picture of the unison of souls, when both the souls' hands are to the same bill, is beautiful—affecting. I have read the passage over twenty times. It has neither one word too many or too few. The picture is perfect: a cabinet gem to be locked up in one's heart. The unison of souls is a charming phrase; but, unhappily, my friend, it is too fine, of too subtle an essence to be acknowledged and respected by the coarse men of the world. The sheriff, for instance, cares not for souls, only inasmuch as they are in bodies. Now, unhappily, so far as we know, disembodied souls do not draw or accept; otherwise, what felicity would it be to me to meet and mingle with your spirit on a five-shilling stamp!

I confess, too, that it is tempting to think that, by the alchemy of a few ink-drops, I could put a hundred and fifty gold pieces (bating the discount,) in the purse of my friend. Alas! if the ceremony began and ended with ink, I would spend a Black sea upon you. You should have my name ten thousand times multiplied, with a good wish in every stroke, hair and thick.

That you have eschewed so many acquaintances, all happy, with clean-nibbed pens, to accept for you, and in the fulness of your friendship selected me, is a compliment, nay more, it is an evidence of your affection which I—I hope to deserve.

You know that *I*, as well as yourself, am apt to be imaginative. Imaginations, however, fly not always together. You say, that by accepting the bill, our souls would be united. My dear friend, for three months, I should feel ourselves growing together, every day strengthening the process. I should feel as if I breathed for two, nay, I should hardly turn in my bed unincumbered. I should, in my fancy, become a double man with only single strength to bear about my added load. You know the story of Sinbad and the Old Man of the Mountain? That is a fine allegory, though not understood. The truth is,

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the Old Man drew a bill, and Sinbad—guileless tar!—accepted it.

You speak of the roses that wreathe about the stamp. They are, indeed, very pretty. But, somehow, my eye fell upon the thistles; which I doubt not, the benevolence of Her Majesty causes to be embossed there: thistles, clearly significant that the man who accepts a bill, save for his own debt, is an ass.

I am, on the contrary,
Your affectionate friend,
JOHN RICHARDS.

LETTER V.

From a very Young Gentleman to a Favourite Actress whom he has only seen in Public.

DEAREST MADAM,

For these past six months I have pulled against my heart—I have resisted my transports—I have fought with my passion. Yes—I determined—I will die, and my consuming secret shall perish with me. Alas! silence is no longer possible. Your witcheries of to-night have driven me with whirlwind force to pen and ink. Your voice is still in my ears—your eyes still upon my cheek—I will, I must write!

Madam, I have long adored you. Love is my witness, that I never hoped to breathe as much; but after your devotion of this evening—after the heroic sacrifice that you have made for love—after the happy willingness you have shown to give up fortune, rank, and friends, and retire with your lover from the world, though that lover was but a woodman, with nothing but his axe to provide for you both—after the development of such a feeling (believe it, adored one, there was not a dry eye in the pit,) I should wrong the sweet susceptibility of your nature, I should wrong myself, to keep silence. No; the way in which you withered the unprincipled nobleman, the tempting seducer in the second act, convinced me with an elec-

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tric shock that we were made for one another! I thought —ecstatic thought!—that catching your eye from the third row, you read my heart, and while the theatre rang with plaudits, that our souls mingled! Ah! was it not so?

But why alone speak of your virtues to-night? Does not every night show you more than something earthly? In whatever situation of life you are placed, are you not in all equally angelic? Have I not known you accused of theft, nay, of murder—and have I not—witness it, Heaven!—adored you all the more for the charge? Has accident or malice thrown a shadow over you, that you have not burst forth all the brighter for the passing gloom! And in all these sorrows I have been with you! I, from the third row of the pit, have trembled with you—have visited you in prison—have attended you to the scaffold's foot, and then, in that delirious moment when the spoons were found—or the child, thought dead, ran on in a white frock—then have I, though still in the third row, caught you innocent to my arms, and wept in ecstasy!

As a daughter, have I not seen you all your father could wish. As a wife, have you not cast a lustre upon all your wedding-rings—as a young and tender mother—pardon me, sweet one—have you not been more devoted than the pelican, gentler than the dove?

How was it possible, then, for six months to behold you, moving in and adorning every sphere—now to see you the polished countess, now the simple country maid—now smiling at want, and now giving away an unconsidered number of bank-notes—how, in the name of Cupid, I ask it, was it possible even from the third row of the pit to behold all this, and not, as I have done, to worship you?

Shall I, ought I, to attempt to describe to you my feelings for one night? Will my love bear with me while I write? Why do I ask? Can I doubt it?

Exactly at half-past six—my heart, my best watch—I take the third seat of the pit. Often, for many minutes, I am there alone. I like it—I enjoy the solitude. I have often wished that not another soul would enter the theatre, that I might, a mental epicure, have all the feast to

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myself. I seem to grudge every man his seat, as slowly one by one drops in. I unwillingly suffer any body to participate in your smiles and honied words. No: I would have you act all to myself. Even applause sometimes throws me into a dangerous paroxysm: I feel it as an intrusion on my privilege that any one should dare to applaud but me; my blood boils to my fingers' ends; but I suppress my feelings, and have as yet, though sorely tempted, knocked no man from his seat.

I have breathed the secret of my love to nobody; and yet my eyes must have betrayed me. Forgive me; I could not control my eyes. Methinks you ask me, who has discovered my love? Smile not, I will tell you—the fruit-women. Good creatures! there is not one who does not hurry to me with a play-bill, folded down at the glorious letters that compose your name, her finger—as though by accident—pointed at the soul-delighting word. I will not tell you how I treasure those bills; no, you shall never know that every such play-bill is folded beneath my pillow at night, and is resigned to a morocco portfolio in the morning; my sensations at the theatre first briefly marked in the margin. This you shall *never* know.

Let me, however, return to my third seat. The curtain is down—the orchestra yet empty. That curtain seems to shut me from Paradise, for I know you are behind it. The musicians come in, and my heart begins to throb at the overture. The play begins; perhaps you are discovered in Scene I., in the depths of misery—how deliciously my brain beats to know it. You speak; and all my veins are throbbing like the tongue of a Jews'-harp. Perhaps you sing; and then I feel a kind of sweet swooning sickness—a sort of death made easy—that I can't describe. At times you dance; and then do I seem lifted by some invisible power, and made to float about you. Then you leave the stage, and all who come after are no more to me than jointed dolls with moving eyes. How I loathe the miserable buffoon—the comedy-man, as he is called—who, while I am languishing for your next appearance, makes the empty audience laugh about me: such mirth seems an insult to my feelings—a desecration of my love.

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No! you from the stage, plot and players are lost to me; I sit, only thinking of your return—sometimes abstracted from the scene, mechanically counting the scattered hairs in the head of the first fiddle.

And thus, until the curtain is about to drop, and then—my heart with it—I throw a bouquet, that has nestled all the night in my button-hole, at your fairy feet. Then do I rush from the pit to the stage-door; and there—the more delighted if it rains—there do I stand until, sweetly cloaked and shawled, I watch you—see your Adelaide boots emerge into the street, and, with a thought, vanish into cab or coach. Ha! the door is closed with a slam that seems to snap my heart-strings. The horse-shoes sound in the distance—I am alone. I wander to my lodgings, sometimes in despair, and sometimes in delirious spirits, feeling that I have your arm warm and pressing under mine, and still seeing your eyes look at me, as I thought they looked at the third row of the pit.

I arrive at my cold lodging. Yet, ere I sleep, I look at your dozen faces—for I have at least a dozen—plain and coloured, hung about my walls. Yes, my beloved one! there you are, and though only published from half a crown to five shillings, worlds should not buy you of me!

If you have played a new part, I touch no breakfast until I read the papers. How my heart goes down upon its knees to the sensible critic who tries—although vainly—to sing your full deserts; whilst for the wretch who finds fault, or—but enough on this disgusting theme. There are monsters in the human form who write so-called criticisms for newspapers.

And now, my dearest love, in the same spirit of frankness—with that boundless gush of affection—which you have so wonderfully developed to-night—with that fervour and truth which prove to me that we were born for one another—and that I have too rightly read your heart to believe that my want of fortune will be any defect in your eyes—rather, indeed, I should say, from what I have seen to-night, a recommendation—

I remain, your devoted Lover,

CHARLES SPOONBILL.

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P. S. Please, dearest, leave an answer at the stage-door. And, dearest, pray let me catch your eye in the third row to-morrow.

LETTER VI.

Answer from the Actress's Father to the very Young Gentleman.

SIR,

You are either a madman or a fool. I have to inform you that I usually carry a stout stick. Any more letters to my daughter, and you may become acquainted with it. Should you, however, be beyond my power of chastisement, there *is* a certain gentleman, to whom, on the advice of my daughter, I have only to show your letter, and he will commission his footman to thrash you as your impertinence deserves.

Your obedient Servant,
THESPIS BURNTCORK.

P. S. In future I shall keep *my* eye upon the third row of the pit.

LETTER VII.

From a Gentleman to his Friend, on being called to the Bar.

MY DEAR TOM,

I hope I am the first to congratulate you. What a career is open to you! There is such loftiness of purpose—such true nobility of aim in the profession to which, with a lover's fondness, you have bound yourself that, in a measure, I feel myself glorified by the advancement of my friend!

You are now called to the bar! Yes, you are of the happy few chosen by the solemn election of the law as the privileged champions of humanity. To you the widow and the orphan may prefer their prayers; in you they are

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taught to look for an adviser and a benefactor. Injured lowliness may claim the bounty of your counsel, and innocence betrayed, demand the lightning of your words.

With these thoughts, what strengthening comfort must support you through the paths of study still to be adventured! Feeling the dignity of your mission, your mind will instinctively reject whatever is mean and mercenary—will assimilate to itself all that is beautiful, and pure, and good. In your hours of study you will feel that you are arming yourself for the overthrow of craft, oppression, and all the numerous brood of ignorance and ill: you will be sustained by the thought, that you are dedicating the powers you have received from Heaven to the noblest vindication of its grandest truth,—justice to all men. With this belief, you will labour rejoicingly: you will dedicate your night to study, and the early lark will greet you at your book.

It is, I know, averred that the study of law is dry and harsh—a barren, thankless theme; that "the Books" have that within them to weary the most patient spirit. And so, indeed, it may be to those who as mere wordcatchers would study them; who, incapable of considering them in a philosophic light as operative on the social mass, would seek their pages as Indians seek poison berries,—only for better means to slay their game with.—But you, my dear friend, have nobler aspirations; you contemplate law as the discreet and virtuous daughter of Justice, and not as her Abigail.

When you look around and consider the various occupations of men, how sweet must be your self-complacency! You cannot but observe how thousands are doomed to a plodding obscurity; how thousands pass from birth to death with no one action of their lives to signalize themselves among their fellows: how, like corn, they grow, ripen, and are cut down, leaving behind them no mark of their past existence. Again, how many pass their days in acts of violence, making life one scene of wrong and tumult; whilst others creep and wind through the world, timorous and cunning, with little of the majesty of man to glorify them. Forgetful of the greatness of their mission

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as human creatures they dwell within the small circle of their selfishness, all things beyond mere things of fable.

How different is your lot! You are "called to the bar:" you are chosen to play a part before the eyes of the whole world. You are to uplift your voice in defence of all that dignifies our nature: you are to work the daily champion of the weak and the distressed. Is it possible that man can have a more glorious vocation? Is it within the ambition of a truly virtuous mind to achieve greater triumphs?

Again, how beautiful will be the study of human nature laid before you! Every day you will be called to read that wondrous volume, the human heart, in all its strange yet fascinating contradictions. And when, in the fulness of fame, distinguished by every attribute of moral goodness, you are summoned to the bench,—you will display to the world one of its noblest spectacles, a great and good man honoured for his worth. Your elevation, whilst it rewards the labours of your own clear spirit, will, star-like, shine upon the hopes of others, inciting them to act your worthiness again and again. Thus will your excellence be multiplied, and example beget example.

Believe me, my dear Tom,
Your sincere friend,
JUSTUS HARTLEY.

LETTER VIII.

Reply of the Gentleman called to the Bar to his Friend.

MY DEAR HARTLEY,

You are, I find, the same enthusiastic, unsophisticated creature that I left at Cambridge. May you never meet with aught to change the noble simplicity of your nature!

True it is, I am "called;" and most true I may, if I would wish to starve, dub myself knight of all distressed matrons, virgins, and orphans. Unfortunately, however, for your rhapsody, it will always lie in the breast of the

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mother of accidents, whether I champion the wronged or the wronger; whether I am to pour oil and honey into wounds, or to be the humble instrument that adds another bruise: whether, indeed, I fight on the side of Virtue, or lustily take arms against her. This, however, is the accident of my fate; and so that good retainers come in, I am content to bow to it. In your noble philanthropy, JUSTUS, please to consider the condition of the world, if only what seemed virtuous and innocent were defended—if all, who by the force of circumstances appeared knaves, were left to scramble for themselves. Look at the wrong committed under this ignorant devotion to abstract right. Virtue making victims by her very bigotry!

As for the hours of study, they certainly bring their sweets; but verily not after the fashion you, in your blithe ignorance, imagine. Law, my dear fellow, is not a region of fairy to be searched for golden fruits and amaranthine flowers; no, it is a deep, gloomy mine, to be dug and dug, with the safety lamp of patience lighting us, through many a winding passage—a lamp which, do what we will, so frequently goes out, leaving us in darkness.

I grant you many of the high, ennobling privileges of the profession that your eloquence has dwelt upon; but there are others which, if you know not, permit me in the freedom of friendship to say, you know nothing of the pleasures of the bar. Consider, what invulnerable armour is a wig—a gown! When they are once donned, you are permitted, by the very defence you wear, to play with the characters and feelings of men even as little girls play with dolls; ripping their seams, blackening their faces, making sport with them in any way for the prosperity of your cause, and the benefit of your client. By virtue of your profession, you are emphatically a gentleman; and the very mode in which you are permitted to exercise your calling proves you to be a slanderer for so much money. You are protected by the Court, and, taking full advantage of your position, you may say in the face of Justice that which a regard for your anatomy would not permit you to utter even in a tavern. You are protected, and may to your heart's full wish enjoy your abuse. You

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are pistol-proof, and may therefore throw what mud and call what names you please. You have the privilege of the bar, which in this case means—the privilege of cowardice; and to the last letter you avail yourself of its immunity.

You have likewise forgotten another privilege, that of cross-examination. Ha! my friend, you know my love of a joke, and truly I anticipate much enjoyment from the freedom of tongue allowed me when I shall have a witness to practise upon. How I will "torture him with my wit"—how turn him inside out for the benefit of my client! Indeed, the true heroism of the advocate is only shown by his contempt of all things in honour of his fee. Hence, if retained by homicide to wash white and, if possible, to sweeten the blood-dyed ruffian for the world, I shall not hesitate (though assured of my client's guilt,) to blacken all the witnesses against him. In pursuit of this high duty, I shall think it onerous upon me to impugn even the chastity of female virtue, so that by casting shame upon innocence, I may open the prison door to murder.

Your affectionate friend,

THOMAS BRASSBY.

P. S. Congratulate me. I have just received my maiden brief: a case against a sempstress, for illegally pawning a shirt.

LETTER IX.

From an Elector to a Member of Parliament, soliciting his Interest for a Place.

HONOURED SIR,

According to my promise, when I last had the pleasure of shaking your worthy and high-minded hand, I take up my pen to let you know how matters go on in our borough of Pottlepot. Oh, sir! the Blues are done for ever! They ought, if they had any sense of their littleness, to crawl upon all-fours the rest of their natural lives;

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it's downright impudence of 'em to think of walking upright on two legs, like incorruptible, independent voters. But, sir, they are done for ever! As I said at the club on Saturday, where we always drink your honoured health, standing, with nine times nine, as I said, after we had toasted your patriotism and all your public and private virtues,—SIR CURTIUS TURNSTILE, says I, sits for Pottlepot for life; it's as good as his own freehold. And so it is, sir. Be sure of it, there isn't a Yellow that wouldn't die for you, with all their wives and families included. You have touched their hearts, SIR CURTIUS, in the proper way, and there isn't a man that wouldn't bleed for you in return. And then for the women; why, I'm a sinner, if there weren't six babies every one of 'em christened CURTIUS. There they were, sir—bless the little cherubs!—with yellow ribands in their caps, and ribands hung all over them, and their mothers and fathers smiling on the colours with all a parent's fondness. Ha, sir! it would have done your noble heart good to hear how the same night we drank the healths of the young CUTIUSES,—the baby Yellows—the future free and independent voters of Pottlepot.

But how, sir, should it be otherwise? Who can forget your kindness when you came among us to canvass? What condescension—what liberality! There's poor MRS. SPRIGGS, the good soul who sells cakes; she never speaks of you without tears in her eyes; and as for her husband—a rascally Blue!—whom the kind creature made so drunk, and then shut the shutters on the day of poll, that when he woke he thought it was still night, and so went to sleep again,—dear MRS. SPRIGGS says she can't enough bless you. Though you bought her jackdaw for ten pounds, she's got another; and for all her husband—like a brutal Blue as he is!—beats her once a week for't, the public-spirited, patriotic soul, *will* teach the bird to cry out, "TURNSTILE for ever! Down with the Blues!"

You'll be glad to hear, SIR CURTIUS, that little BOBBY WINDFALL, the bellows-mender's child, has got over the small-pox, and won't be very much marked. I'm sure you'll be glad of this, from the kind manner with which I

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saw you kiss the suffering babe when it was so very bad indeed.

The organ that you sent down to the chapel plays very beautifully—very! It quite melts the heart of every true Yellow to listen to it. But I am sorry to say—I blush for my species while I write it—that several stiff-necked Blues stay away from chapel because of that organ: whilst one of 'em, with a sneer that meant I know not what, said, "The organ was a most appropriate gift from you, as no sinner could listen to it without thinking of corruption." What he meant by this 'twould puzzle me to discover.

Your kind hospitality in inviting all of us to your mansion in town whenever we should come to London, will in a few days be rewarded. CHOPS the pork-butcher, with BRADS the blacksmith, and STRONG-I'-TH'-ARM the farrier, will be with you—they desire me to say—next week. But pray, SIR CURTIUS, don't give CHOPS too much champagne, as he is apt to be very unruly. And MRS. BRADS hopes you'll not let BRADS stir in London without you're by his side; she says she depends upon you. As for the farrier's wife, she says you're welcome to keep her husband for a month; only when he comes back, she says she shall expect to see what sort of caps they wear in London.

We are all on the look-out for your first speech, as you promised us on the hustings, that it should be a teazer.

I am, SIR CURTIUS,
Your obedient Servant,
And very humble Voter,
HAMPDEN BRICK.

P. S.—I had almost forgotten to say, that my son BRUTUS—the youth to whom you jokingly gave a five-pound note to light a cigar with—is now anxious to enter upon the world. Forgive the feelings of a father; but please to write by return of post whether his place will be in the Excise, the Customs, or the Treasury. I suppose we musn't expect more than two hundred a-year, *to begin with?*

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LETTER X.

Answer of Sir Curtius Turnstile, M. P., to his Constituent, Hampden Brick.

MY DEAR SIR,

It gives me the deepest pleasure to learn the happiness and tranquillity of the favoured borough of Pottlepot. Bound up as my future public life is with the sympathies of the noble-minded and incorruptible men by whose votes I hold my present exalted situation—my present enviable prominence in the eye of the world—it must be to me a vital felicity to know of their felicity. As for the Blues—that desperate faction—that band of little Neros preying on the vitals of their mother-country——but I dismiss them from my thoughts. Contempt relieves me from the excess of indignation.

It is to me a deep happiness to find that I am remembered at your hebdomadal meetings at the Angel. Believe me that every Saturday night I shall spiritually return thanks for the honour that you do me.

The thought that I have awakened a feeling of respect in the bosoms of my fair well-wishers and active supporters of Pottlepot, awards to me the proudest moment of my life. That, with a delicacy which peculiarly distinguishes the disinterested excellence of their sex from the too frequent selfishness of ours, they should give my name to the pledges of their hallowed love, produces feelings in my breast much more easily conceived than described. Tell them from me, good MR. BRICK, that whilst they have complimented me, they have imposed a task upon me—yes, sir, a task; for, henceforth, it must be the peculiar study of life to do nothing that shall be in the least unworthy of my interesting namesakes. It would, I assure you, have given me great pleasure to be their godfather, but—another time.

I am delighted to learn that the excellent MRS. SPRIGGS is in good health. Though decidedly not a woman of high education, she has that instinctive patriotism which

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made the glory of the ancient matron. She might, without a blush, call the mother of the GRACCHI sister. I am more than amused to hear of her jackdaw; and, for her sake, hope for better things from her husband.

Believe me, you only do justice to my feelings, when you say that I shall be happy to hear of the recovery of Master ROBERT WINDFALL. Though asleep, and in a sad condition when I saw him, I *do* think I never looked upon a more intelligent child. I trust he will become a blessing to his parents, and an honour to the ancient mystery of bellows-mending.

What you tell me respecting the organ, shocks me. That the spirit of party can, in such a subject, find matter for its bitterness, makes one almost despair of human nature. Alas! alas! that even the humble present of a church organ cannot escape the ribaldry of party malice. But nothing, sacred or profane, *does* escape it!

You speak of a projected visit to town by CHOPS, BRADS, and STRONG-I'-TH'-ARM, my worthy and indefatigable constituents. There are no men for whose honesty—whose singleness of purpose—whose primitive simplicity of character—I have a higher admiration; but was there ever anything so unfortunate? At present my mansion is undergoing a thorough repair; filled with carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers—in fact, turned inside out. Hence, to my inexpressible annoyance, I shall not have the pleasure of seeing them under my own roof; and what is worse, I fear—I say, I fear—that unavoidable business will, for a week at least, take me from London. However, pray let me know *what day* they intend to set out. I depend upon you not to fail in this.

I have not yet spoken in the House. It is my policy never to throw away powder. But *when* I do make myself heard, depend upon it that Pottlepot will hear the report.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Yours faithfully ever,
CURTIUS TURNSTILE.

P. S.—As for your son, I think it would be a pity that he should bury his precocious talents; for I never saw so

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young a boy smoke with so much maturity, in either the Excise, the Customs, or the Treasury. Take a friend's advice, and bring him up to the bar.

LETTER XI.

From a Tailor for his Bill.

SIR,

When you reflect upon the time that has passed since you did me the honour to enter my books, you will, I am sure, acquit me of any desire to appear pressing. Five years, sir, make a long time in the life of a tradesman; the more especially, with business as it has been. Houses thought good, tumbling down like houses of cards; men, considered men of rock, turning out men of straw; bills sent back, and a thousand other bits of bad luck, enough to break the heart of any tradesman. It is now, sir, two-and-thirty years since I entered business; and, in all my life, I never knew so bad a season: bad enough they have been, to be sure, but nothing like the present. There was a time when a tradesman might now and then think of a little profit; but profits in these days! they don't pay for taking down the shutters.

Therefore, sir, you will, I am sure, pardon me if I solicit you to think of your account. It has been the golden rule of my life never to press a gentleman; but, sir, I am like a peaceable man in a crowd; if I am pushed, I must, whether I will or no, push other people. What has come upon the times I know not; men now ar'nt the men they used to be. I recollect the day when, if a man failed to honour his bill, he was never known to look up again. Now, I am blessed if he doesn't look all the bolder for it. People have entirely lost the shame they had when I was young in business; and, now-a-days, go into the Gazette as they go to Margate, just to freshen themselves up, and feel all the stronger for it. The truth is—or I should never think of pressing you, sir—there seems to be a want of morality throughout all society. One person puts the evil

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down to one thing, another to another. A neighbour of mine—a shrewd shoemaker of the old school—swears it's all owing to the Adelaide boots.

For which reason, sir, I hope you will not think me urgent if I call your thoughts to my bill. There was a time, sir, when I never believed I could do such a thing; but, as I've said, I fear there's no morality left. And how, indeed, should there be? Gentlemen are no longer gentlemen. I have my grandfather's pattern-books by me, sir. He—rest his soul—made for the West End eighty years ago, and, when he died, was buried in superfine black, with twenty coaches to follow. Now, die when I will, I much doubt if—but I have no right to trouble you with my griefs—and so, sir, will stick to business. In grandfather's time gentlemen were known to be gentlemen by their coats. They walked about clothed and marked as superior people; there was no mistake in them, and the lower orders knew their betters by their satins, their velvets, and their gold lace. Now, sir, how are we to know a gentleman? There is no mark, no difference in him: we can only come at his gentility by his manners; a very roundabout way, sir; and one that has led to a great many mistakes. According to the good old plan, you might stand at your shop-door, and count the real gentlemen as they passed; they wore—if I may say as much—their proper uniform, and the common people paid them proper respect for it. And now, if the grandfathers' ghosts of the gentlemen of our day were to meet their grandsons in Piccadilly or Bond street, they'd take half of 'em for a set of carters, or drovers, or some such low animals; they wear nothing but sacks or smock-frocks, with cotton buttons to 'em. Every day of his life, a Duke passes my door to Parliament in a pepper-and-salt linsey-woolsey, duffel, flannel sort of thing, that his tailor, try as hard as he may, can't charge him more than two pounds for. And in this condition his Grace goes to make laws in Parliament. After this, I should like to know how it's to be hoped that common folks are to respect the House of Lords? It's flying in the face of nature to expect it.

No, sir, there is the evil; there the abuse that has, as

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I've often said, sapped the morals of the world, by hustling all folks together in the same cloth and the same cut. It was never intended that the lines of society should be so finely drawn by the tailor, that you could not see them; yet, because it is so, you now have all sorts of discontent, no stability in trade, and no real morals in gentlemen: if the upper classes would only show their true dignity, and return to cut velvet and gold lace, there might even now be some hopes of the country; but while noblemen and gentlemen dress in thirty-shilling coats, there is an end to England. Her real glory set with gold lace. If men never felt the National Debt, it was because they wore embroidered pocket-holes.

You will forgive me troubling you with all this, but I could not think of putting your account into my lawyer's hands, without showing to you the troubles that a tradesman has in these days to fight with.

Hoping you will therefore not take the writ amiss,

I remain, your obedient Servant,

SAMUEL STITCHINGTON.

LETTER XII.

The Gentleman's Answer to the Tailor.

MR. STITCHINGTON,

Is it indeed five years that I have graced your books! How fleet is life—it scarcely appeared to me as many months. Although I have never given you a bill for the amount, how have the years passed by! You will guess my meaning when I assure you it is a theory of mine that the wings of time are no other than two large bill stamps, duly drawn and accepted. With these he brings his three, six, or nine months into as many weeks. He is continually wasting the sand from his glass, drying the wet ink of promissory notes. But let me not moralize.

You want money, MR. STITCHINGTON. As I am exactly in the like predicament, you are in a capital condition to

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sympathise with me. You say you never recollect so bad a season as the present. Of course not, no tradesman ever did: the present season is always the worst of the lot, however bad the others may have been. It says much for the moral and physical strength of such shop-keepers to see them still flourishing from worse to worse; they really seem, like church-yard grass, to grow fat and rank upon decay. You touchingly observe that present profits do not pay for taking down the shutters. My good sir, then why proceed in a ruinous expense? In the name of prudence, why not keep them continually up?

You say you never press a gentleman. Why, in familiar phrase, we never press a lemon; but then we squeeze it most inexorably. That men should go into bankruptcy, yet live and laugh afterwards, is a great proof of the advancing philosophy of our times. A Roman tailor, incapable of meeting his bill, would, heathen-like, have fallen upon his own needle, or hung himself—in a bottom of whitey-brown. The English tradesman suffers Christian hope to play about his goose, and fresh from Basinghall-street dreams of golden eggs.

Whether your neighbour is right in attributing our present social laxity to the Adelaide boot, is a matter I have no time to consider. The speculation is curious; nevertheless, rigidly to follow the subject would take us even beyond metaphysics.

You are quite right, MR. STITCHINGTON, as to the revolutionary effects of the disuse of velvet and gold lace. It is not, I assure you, my fault that they are not again the vogue. If permitted, I should be happy to have a dozen suits of you. Fine clothes were a sort of gentleman-made-easy; as you profoundly observe, they at once declared the man. Now, one has to work out the gentleman by one's mode and manners—at times, I assure you, a very difficult labour.

I entirely agree with you as to the cause that has lowered the consequence of Parliament—the vile, plebeian outside of England's senators. I hold it almost impossible that a nobleman can vote with a proper respect for his order unless in full court-suit. There is a dangerous sympathy

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between common garments and the common people. The Reform Bill had never been carried if Lord Brougham had not worn tweed trousers. Universal Suffrage will be carried—if ever carried—by Peers in check shirts, and, as you pathetically remark, thirty-shilling coats.

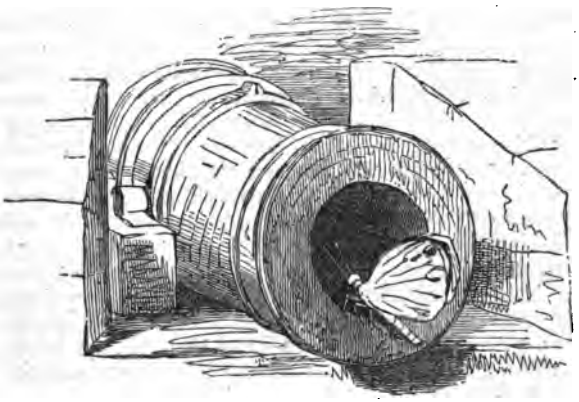
I remain your obedient servant,

WALTER LE DOO.

P. S. My humanity suggests this advice to you. Don't go to any law expenses; as your letter found me making up my schedule. An odd coincidence; I had just popped down your name as the postman knocked.

LETTER XIII.

From a Young Gentleman desirous of entering the army, to his Guardian.



MY DEAR SIR,

In our last conversation, you more than hinted at the necessity of my making choice of a profession. I have again and again considered the important subject, and

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am at length resolved. Yes, I have made my election—I will become a soldier. I have looked about me, I trust dispassionately; I have weighed and counterweighed all other things with the sword, and found them as nothing to the glorifying steel. Do not believe, sir, that I am biassed in my judgment by the outward show and ceremonious parade of military life; no, sir, although I can well believe that they have a false influence on the youthful mind, I nevertheless trust that I have too well benefited by your philosophy to confound the noble profession of arms with its holiday blazonry—its review-day splendour. The mere human clod may turn from the plough, beckoned by the fluttering ribands of the recruiting sergeant—the clown's heart may, to his astonishment, beat to the beating sheepskin, and so beguile him into the ranks—but, sir, I trust that education has taught me a truer valuation of things, enabling me to consider the profession of a soldier in its abstract glory, in its naked loveliness. I look only at the wreath of CÆSAR, and care not for the outward splendour of his legions.

Oh, sir, when I read the career of conquerors, I have a strange belief that I was born to be a soldier! I feel such a sympathizing throb of heart at the achievements of an ALEXANDER, that all other pursuits, save that of arms, seem to me poor, frivolous, and unworthy of the highest dignity of human nature. To me, soldiers appear the true lords of the earth; and other men, however rich, but as mere greasy serfs—creatures with their souls dwelling darkly in money bags. The game of war is a pastime for gods, and man is sublimated by its exercise. And then death—death in the bed of glory—with a whole country weeping over our ashes! is not that a prospect, sir, to quicken the blood of youth, and intoxicate the brain with the sweetest, the noblest draughts of ambition? And then, sir, the laurel, flourishing in everlasting green, and circling our memory for ever!

Nevertheless, should you wish me to delay the purchase of a commission for a few months, I trust you will permit me to visit Germany this autumn to witness the reviews. It is said that the troops expected to assemble will

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be the flower of the world. I know not, too, how many thousands. What a sublime spectacle! In their different uniforms—with their banners, their artillery, and their leaders—many of them with the history of the last wars cut in scars upon their bodies! I do not think the world can show a nobler sight. So superhuman in its power—so awful in its beauty!

And now, sir, having freely communicated to you my desire to enter the army, permit me to assure you that I shall devote my entire soul to the study of my duties as a soldier. They have, I know, their severity: but have they not also their rewarding sweetness? Yes, sir, for how delicious must it be—the heat and fury of the battle over—to solace the wounded, to protect the helpless! In those moments the noblest emotions of our common nature must be awakened; they must repay the warrior for toil, privation, suffering unutterable. Yes, sir—to know that in such an hour we are lessening the anguish of a fellow-creature must for a time elevate us beyond the common impulses of poor humanity.

Anxiously awaiting your reply—and with it, as I fondly believe, your consent—

I remain your affectionate ward,

ARTHUR BAYTWIG.

P. S. Do not think, my dear sir, that the opinions of a certain young lady, who has always declared she would marry no one but a soldier, have had the least influence upon my determination. No, sir; not the least, I assure you.

LETTER XIV.

Answer of the Guardian to the Young Gentleman.

MY DEAR ARTHUR,

I THOUGHT more highly of your discrimination. I believed that you knew me better than to make so foolish a

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proposition. My opinions on war and its instruments are, I know, not the opinions of the world; it would save the world—I am vain enough to think—much guilt, much misery, if they were so.

You, doubtless, believe your letter the result of an honest enthusiasm; and yet, to my fancy, it is nothing more than the folly of a boy, who, unconscious of his prompter, writes with a fiend dictating at his elbow. Yes, my boy, a fiend; he is too often busy among us—one of the vilest and most mischievous demons of all the brood of wickedness. To be sure, he visits men not in his own name—oh no! he comes to them in the finest clothes and under the prettiest alias. He is clothed in gay colours—has yards of gold trimming about him—a fine feather in his cap—silken flags fluttering over him—music at his heels—and his lying, swindling name is—Glory. Strip the thing so called, and how often will you find the abhorred nakedness of a demon. Be assured of it, fife and drum make the devil's choicest music. He blows and beats—for, being a devil, he can do this at the same time—and makes the destructive passions of men twist and wriggle in the hearts of even peaceful folk, and with the magic of his tattoo drives them on to mischief. You know, people say I have strange, violent thoughts. Well! I think every sheep whose skin is turned into drum-parchment, has been sacrificed not to the gods but devils.

You tell me that you are smitten with glory in the abstract—with its naked honour. Pooh! like a poor-souled footman, you are content to take the blows for the fineness of the livery.

You say, that when you read the history of conquerors, you yearn to become a soldier. Well, I dispute it not; there have been men made soldiers by tyranny and wrong, whose memories may, like the eternal stars, shine down upon us; these men may be envied. But I, too, have read the lives of conquerors; and, as I live, they no more tempted me to emulate them, than the reading of the Newgate Calendar would make me yearn to turn foot-pad or house-breaker.

At best, soldiers are the evils of the earth. The child-

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ren of human wrong and human weakness. Understand me, I would not have men ground arms, and, with quaker-like submission, cry "friend" to the invader. Nevertheless, do not let us prank up a dire necessity with all sorts of false ornament, and glorify wholesale homicide. You say war is the pastime of gods.—HOMER tells us as much. And pretty gods they were who played at the sport! In my time, I have known many men who, for very humbly imitating them in some of their amusements, have died on the gallows or withered on board the hulks. I trust the time will come when it will bring as great shame to men to mimic Mars, as it now deals upon the other sex to imitate Venus.

You talk glibly enough of the bed of glory. What is it? A battle-field, with thousands blaspheming in agony about you? Your last moments sweetened, it may be, with the thought that somewhere on the field lies a bleeding piece of your handiwork—a poor wretch in the death-grasp of of torture? Truly, that is a bed of greater glory which is surrounded by loving hearts—by hands uplifted in deep, yet cheerful prayer. There are thoughts, too—it is my belief—better, sweeter far than thoughts of recent slaying, to help the struggling soul from out its tenement.

You talk, too, of the nation's tears! In what museum does the nation keep her pocket-handkerchiefs? Depend upon it, nations that love to fight, are not the nations that love to weep. I grant it, many a fine, simple fellow, has died in the belief of being wept over by his country, who has nevertheless been shamefully defrauded of his dues. My dear boy, never sell your life for imaginary drops of water. And then you rave about laurel—an accursed plant of fire and blood. Count up all the crowns of CÆSAR, and for the honest, healthful service of man, are they worth one summer cabbage?

You would wish to see the German review—you think it so noble a sight? Be assured, if you can teach your eyes to look through the spectacles of truth, there cannot be a sadder, a more rueful exhibition—one reflecting more upon the true dignity of human nature—one more accusatory of the wisdom and goodness of man—than thousands

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of men dressed and harnessed, and nicely schooled for the destruction of their fellow-creatures. All their finery, all their trappings, are to me but the gimcrackery of the father of wickedness. In my time, I have seen thousands of soldiers drawn up, with a bright sky shining above them; and I have thought them a foul mass—a blot—a shame upon the beautiful earth—an affront to the beneficence of heaven! But then, I have odd thoughts—strange opinions.

You say it will be sweet, the battle over, to solace the wounded. My dear boy, it will be sweeter far not to begin the battle at all. It may be very humane to apply the salve after you have dealt the gash,—but surely it would be better wisdom, truer humanity, to inflict no hurt. And, in time, men will learn this truth; they *are* learning it; and, as I would not see you in a profession which I trust is speedily becoming bankrupt, you will never, with my consent, purchase into the army.—Your affectionate friend,

BENJAMIN ALLPEACE.

LETTER XV.

From a Maiden Aunt to a Niece, on the Imprudence of Marriage.

MY DEAR CLARIBEL,

I should ill acquit myself of the duties of an aunt—should show myself wickedly ungrateful for the goodness that has hitherto preserved me from the cares and frivolities of the marriage-state—were I to see you, my sister's child, ready to throw yourself into a bottomless pit, and never so much as scream to save you. It was only yesterday that Doctor PRUNES acquainted me with your headstrong passion for an unworthy creature of a man. Although I had grouse for dinner—and you know how I love it!—I never ate so little; and, in the evening, revoked twice in only three rubbers. What with the news of Doctor PRUNES and the toothache, I have scarcely slept all night, and at breakfast, instead of buttered toast, absolutely gave chicken to the parrot. May you, even at the twelfth hour, prove worthy of all I suffer for you!

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You are only three-and-twenty, and yet, with a forwardness that makes me blush for the true dignity of womanhood, you already think of marriage! I had hoped that my lessons of morality would have taught you better things. I had flattered myself that, strengthened by my principles, you would have risen above the too common weakness that unites a woman to a creature in every way inferior to herself, whatever the said creatures, in the fulness of their impudence, may trumpet to the contrary. I do not dispute that men may be necessary in the world; but, at the best, they are only necessary evils. It is thus that every really sensible woman should consider them. In the vulgar attribute of brutes—mere muscular strength—they are certainly our superiors; but how immeasurably beneath us are they in all that constitutes true greatness—in delicacy, liberality, tenderness, friendship, fortitude, and taciturnity? And, in their hypocrisy, they confess as much; for they call us angels—(though, I am proud to say, no man ever so insulted *my* understanding,)—yes, angels, that they may make us slaves. How any woman can read the marriage ceremony without having her eyes opened to the real intentions of the creatures, is to me most wonderful. Love, honour, and obey! My blood burns to think of it! To the ears of a sensible woman every syllable rattles like a dog-chain.

I did think that my own ~~CLARIBEL~~—taught by my precept and example—would as soon have put her finger into a rat-trap as a wedding-ring. I did believe that you would consider all the fine things that men utter as nothing more than the false notes of a bird-catcher; mere sounds to bring our free minds "from the heaven of high thoughts," as some poet says, and shut 'em up in cages. How women can listen to a jargon of loves and doves, is melancholy to think of. A woman of really strong mind hates Cupids as she hates cockroaches.

Nevertheless, my dear, I can sympathize with human infirmity. Every body is not born to keep a heart of virgin ice that, pressed as it may be, no pressing can melt. Still, there is nothing like a diversion of thought to cure a hurt. It is wonderful how a wound heals, if we never

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think of it. Therefore, return his letters to the man who would ensnare you; and, forgetful of the cares and littlenesses of marriage, give up all your thoughts to astronomy. It is a charming study, and presents a more ennobling field for the human mind than the small limits of wedlock. How insignificant seems the wife, studious of the goings-out and comings-in of a mere husband, compared to the nobler woman who knows all about the Great and Little Bear! How petty the noblest house in the noblest square, to the House of Jupiter or Mars! how perplexing the cares of children to the lofty contemplation of the Via Lactea, (known, as Doctor PRUNES says, to the lower orders as the Milky Way;) how insulting to the true greatness of the female mind the smallness of the wedding-ring, when the ring of Saturn may be all her own, with no incumbrance of Saturn himself!

Or if, CLARIBEL, you want enthusiasm for the stars, why is there not geology? Properly considered, can there be a more delightful employment for the female mind than to settle the ages of things that vulgar souls care nothing about? Who would not turn from the cries of a nursery, to the elevating sounds of felspar and quartz? What really great woman would study the mere heart of a mere man, when she might discover fossil shrimps and caterpillars in marble? No. Woman will never assert her true dignity till she can wisely choose between the two.

Then, after some ten or fifteen years—for it is a study too rashly submitted to the young—botany may disclose its lovely mysteries. How delightful, what true freedom for the human soul, to be exempt from cares of husband and family, and to know every thing about the operations of pollen! But I am incautiously anticipating a subject reserved for your maturer years.

Break, then, the chains with which mere tyrant man would bind you, and—defying the slavery of conjugal life—live like DIANA,—and your still affectionate aunt,

LUCRETIA DRAGONMOUTH.

P. S. Is it true that the wife of Doctor BEETLEBROW is really dead? I wouldn't utter a word against the departed; I should hope not, but—is she really dead?

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LETTER XVI.

The Niece's Answer.

MY DEAR AUNT,

How can I ever express my gratitude to you, how repay the care with which you seek to gather me to that sisterhood of which LUCRETIA DRAGONMOUTH is the crowning rose? Alas, madam! I feel my unworthiness! I should but bring a scandal on the community by the frivolity of my words and the earthliness of my desires. I have the greatest respect for DIANA, but feel it impossible to become lady's-maid to her. Therefore, dear Aunt, you must even leave me to my headlong fate; and unbroken rest, heartier meals, and successful rubbers, be your continual reward.

It would ill become my inexperience to dispute the sentence you pass upon the other sex. Men are, doubtless, all you say of them: therefore, forewarned by your opinion, I shall endeavour to support the necessary evil that may fall to my lot with all the fortitude I may. As for the marriage ceremony, I have read it again and again, and—such is the hopeless perversity of my taste—think it the loveliest composition! To my ears, it murmurs the very music of Paradise.

I feel the full force of what you say about astronomy. No doubt, its study might relieve a wounded heart, but then as I feel no wound that is not most delicious, why should I go to the stars to get rid of it? Yes, madam, I can forgive your talking about the stars. *You* have never seen my ALFRED'S eyes! No doubt the Great and Little Bear have their attractions; but you never saw my ALFRED'S moustache!

Geology, too, may be fascinating. It may be musical to talk of felspar and quartz; to seek for fossil bees that made honey for the pre-Adamites; but you never heard my ALFRED sing *Love in thine Eyes*—you never felt the pressure of his throbbing hand!

As for botany, I really feel its influence in a manner I

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never felt before; for I am just now called to choose my bridal wreath of orange flowers, and must, therefore, abruptly conclude—

Your affectionate niece,
CLARIBEL MAYDEW.

P. S. It is not true that MRS. BEETLEBROW is dead; though once she was given over by her physicians. Ha, my dear aunt! how foolish it was of you thirty years ago to quarrel with the dear doctor, and only—as I've heard—for treading on the toes of a nasty little pug!

LETTER XVII.

From a Gentleman to his Friend entreating him to renounce the Bottle.

MY DEAR PETER,

May I, by a friendship of thirty years' growth, be permitted to address you on your faults—or, rather, your fault; for it is so capacious that it swallows every other error; for in the same way that boa constrictors gulp toads and other unsightly creatures of a smaller dimension. May I venture to remonstrate with you on—well, it must be said—your habitual drunkenness? Alas! my friend, to what a condition has this folly, this wickedness, reduced you! This morning only, I saw a full grown cucumber in a bottle: there is nothing in the object; it is a common-place, to be seen in the windows of every pickle merchant; and yet did that imprisoned cucumber touch my heart, and bring pathetic moisture into my eyes; for by the tyranny of association it made me think of my forlorn friend. Yes; looking at that cucumber, trained to grow in its glass prison, did I behold in it the hopeless condition of PETER RUBYGILL! There he is—thought I—there is PETER, and who shall deliver him? And how, alas! does that plethoric gourd fully declare the story of my friend! How, like him, was it insinuated in its green youth—a very sucker—into

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LETTER XVII.

FROM A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND,

Entreating him to renounce

THE BOTTLE.

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the bottle's throat; and how, when there, was it made to grow and swell, until far too large to be withdrawn, it possessed the whole of the bottle, and was then cut off for ever from the vine that had cherished it! And is it not thus, PETER, with a doomed drunkard? Does he not enter the bottle in the greenness of his days, and though he may again and again escape from the thing that threatens to inclose him, at length is it not impossible for him to get away? Habit makes him swell, and there is no hope for him; cut off from the genial world, he has no other dwelling-place than a bottle. Verily, PETER RUBYGILL, Bacchus—like a pickle-merchant—has his bottled cucumbers, and you are of them!

And yet, PETER, I would fain hope for you. In the name of all that is great and beautiful in the world, why seal your eyes to its grandeur and loveliness? why walk with your drowsy brain in a fog, when, touched by the light of beauty, it might answer the touch with most delicious music? What, in truth, can you know of the bounty and magnificence showered about you? No more than a silly fly, that, finding itself in the palace of a king, sips and sips, and tumbles headlong into the first syrup it may light upon. Have I not seen you leaden-eyed—clay-pated—almost dumb with pain, hammering at your temples—degraded by nausea tugging at your stomach—your hand shaking like a leaf—your mouth like the mouth of an oven—and your tongue, I am sure of it, like burnt shoe-leather? And for what, PETER RUBYGILL? For some six hours' madness the night before?

You were left a comfortable competence. Where is it now? Gone. The bottle is the devil's crucible, and melts all!

You were tolerably good-looking. And now is your countenance but as a tavern sign; where numberless little imps—liberated by drawn corks—continue to give a daily touch and touch of red, proud of their work, as portrait-painters to the devil himself.

There was a time when your word was true as gold. And now, upon whom can you pass it? From the mouth of a drunkard, the most solemn promise is no better than

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the best-made bad money; it may pass for a time, but is certain to be nailed to the world's counter at last.

You had friends. But there is a mortal fever in the reputation of a drunkard, and sober men wisely avoid it.

You have a wife. Has she a husband? No. She vowed to love a man, and you are a liquor cask. Can you expect her affection? You might as reasonably expect her wedding-ring to hoop a wine-barrel.

You have children. Poor things! They see a satyr sprawl and reel before them; and, in their innocence, blush not as yet to call the creature father!

But, my dear PETER, there is yet hope. Learn to love home. Avoid the tavern. It is in the tavern-cellar that the devil draws up his army array against the brains and good resolves of men. It is there that he reviews his legions of bottles, and prepares them for the attack upon weak humanity. But, arm yourself, PETER; meet the assailants with cold water; and, in the fight, you shall have the earnest prayers of your old friend,

CORYDON RIVERS.

LETTER XVIII.

The Answer.

MY DEAR CORYDON,

You talk of the beauty of the earth—*you* talk of the magnificence of the world! Why, then, let moles sing psalms to the moon, and that hermit in feathers, the screech-owl, tune a ditty to the noonday sun. The bottle is the true philosopher's microscope, and shows him worlds within worlds that you, poor naked-eyed wretches, never had the heart to dream of.

You say that you have seen me with my brain in a fog! Poor ignorance! After a night's—say three nights'—continual happiness, you little know the bliss I walk in. You little think of the genius within me, that turns your scoundrel streets of London into the abodes of the blessed. What see I there but love and truest brotherhood? The very knockers wink and laugh at me; and roses and honeysuc-

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kles grow about every lamp-post. There are, I know, weak, puling creatures, who talk of headaches; but these are milk-sop neophytes, not yet of the true priesthood of our order. What if now and then I have a twinge? Think you I accuse the bottle? I should be a villain to do so. No: it's the d—d east wind.

As for the fortune that was left me, it is true I have invested it in the bottle; and, oh! what compound interest have I had for my money! Whilst you would count every rascal guinea, and, after you had counted all, broke into a cold sweat to think there was no more, *I*—seated on my tavern-throne have had wealth that would confound all arithmetic. All about me has been glorious riches! I have drunk out of hollowed diamonds, and spat in gold-dust.

It is my darling faith every bottle contains in it a pair of beautiful wings, to lift poor men above the gutter-mud which this sober world is made of. A pair of wings! And I, like MERCURY, can't do without three pair.

I have somewhere read it at school—ha! RIVERS, sometimes at the heel of the night I see you again in your green jacket, and I sit and enjoy myself, and let the sweetest of tears run down my nose—well, never mind that—I read it at old CANETWIG'S—that JUPITER fastened the earth to heaven with a gold chain. All a flam, my dear boy! It was no chain, but a splendid and most magnificent line of linked bottles. The higher you climb, the further you are from this vagabond world. Pity, my dear fellow—pity it is, that the road is so devilish slippery!

You say I had friends. *Had!* I have millions. Ha! my good creature—for you are good, I believe, sober and stupid as you are—you don't know the philanthropy that a corkscrew lets out upon me. I may have been ruffled; may I be pardoned for it; I may now and then have thought harshly of my poor erring fellow-creatures, but—pop!—out comes the cork, and the wine, as it bubbles forth, speaks pacifyingly, soothingly. Again—again! The bottle coos like any dove; and I have not listened to it above two or three hours, when I feel myself turned into one large lump of human honey! And then these two hands of mine are multiplied ten million times, and I shake hands with every

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man, woman, and child upon this beautiful earth, my creditors included.

But all this, though much, is nothing to the wisdom—the knowledge—that drink so subtly lets in upon poor, darkened man. What is it? You have studied these things; but then you have studied them with a dry, dusty throat; and so, can know no more of the true operations of the intellect—glorious intellect—of majestic man, than a monkey knows of a steam-engine. Well, what is it? I say, what is it? Ha! my dear soul, if you had only two bottles of the stuff that is now shining before me—shining like a lion's eye—you'd know all about it. Then you'd know metaphysics—that is a metaphysics assisted by glorious wine—here's is a bumper to you, old cock! God bless your little green jacket!—metaphysics is this, as you'd know. Every man has an angel within him. Lord love us! and yet, sometimes, we use one another as though we lodged nothing but devils. Well, as I said, every man has an angel within him; and this angel—poor thing!—you dull, sober, miserly fellows, board in the most rascally way; giving him nothing generous to drink, or just wetting his lips, and there an end. And what's the consequence? Why, he tells you nothing worth knowing—just casts up your accounts for you—gives you a nudge when stocks are going, or some small chandler matter of the kind; but, with a noble resentment of your shabbiness, he does nothing more. What does he to me, who know how to treat him? I give him bumper after bumper,—and my brain feels him expanding his wings! you, poor wretch! don't know that he has wings—bumper after bumper, until, at last, my angel takes up his golden fiddle, and plays me such a tune (I can feel him rosining his bow at this minute)—such a tune, that as it sounds I catch all sorts of wisdom; thoughts like diamonds, bright and everlasting.

Ha! ha! he's playing now, and I drop the pen to listen, and feel myself an emperor.

* * * * * * * *

——My dear Corydon,

Don't mind the stuff I 've scrawled above,—for I 've been mad this month past. I am just arrested.

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You'll find me at —, Chancery-lane. Come, come—for God's sake, bring fifty pounds, and you will everlastingly oblige—

Your wretched friend,
PETER RUBYGILL.

LETTER XIX.

From a Country Actor to a London Manager, for an Engagement.

DEAR SIR,

It may probably have escaped your recollection, that in the year ——, you did me the high honour to pay me a very flattering compliment on my acting—imperfect as it was—of *Catesby*. You then said, sir—and I have treasured the words—that should it be ever your destiny to manage a London Theatre, you would be only too happy to make me one of your little set. Yes, sir, "little set" were the words! I am, indeed, sir, most happy to find by the newspapers that that time has arrived. It is a great day for the profession. Such an event has long been wanted; and at length Shakspeare—that really great creature!—will have fair play done him. How happy, indeed, shall I be, if permitted in the smallest degree to assist in that national triumph!

To return, sir, to the compliment you so kindly paid to my *Catesby*. That, sir, was ten years ago, and—but "on their own merits modest men are dumb"—I flatter myself that an unceasing attention to my profession, and more especially to the advice you were pleased to give me, has made me not less worthy of applause. You may forget that advice—I never shall. The *Horatio* had been arrested coming to the theatre, and I studied the part from scene to scene. It was where *Hamlet* discovers *Ophelia's* death, and falls upon *Horatio's* neck. Pardon me! but can I ever forget the point—the telling point—you made there? Never! It was then you said to me "My good sir, I have been much pleased with your attention—very much

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pleased—you are in the rough, very much in the rough at present; in fact you know nothing: but keep your eye on me—do as I do—exactly as I do—and you can't be wrong." From that moment, sir, I set you up as my model, and—but friends are partial—I have been told that the resemblance between our styles of acting is extraordinary.

You may possibly have forgotten me, and therefore will excuse it, if I remind you that my figure is good, indeed much improved since we met. My voice is powerful; its intonation—I have been told—like KEAN'S (of course I mean EDMUND)—my face expressive, and capable of any sort of making up—and for my study, I can swallow any thing. With all this, sir, I shall be very happy to come in as one of the team. Yes, sir, all I want is opportunity; the chance of playing before a London audience, quite convinced that the rest is in myself, and *must come out*.

On the other side I forward a list of parts. I have gained—I may say it—great reputation in the provinces in all of them. The *Stranger* is a favourite bespeak part of mine—and my *Claude Melnotte* is a great hit with all the boarding schools. Some critics have given the palm to my *Macbeth*, and some to my *Jonathan Bradford*. If I may be allowed to have any opinion, I think them both equally good in their way, though, I need not say to you, requiring different touches from the artist. Still, he must be something of a painter who can use the delicate camel-hair of that great creature Shakspeare, and the four-pound brush of the melo-dramatist. My sailors, too, have been accounted remarkably good; especially at the sea-ports. I have played *William* in the Surrey trash of *Black-Eyed Susan*, in a way to make T. P. COOKE shake in his shoe-buckles. I could say more, but it is painful to speak of one's self. I therefore take the liberty of forwarding with this, a small book in which you will find a great number of criticisms, carefully pasted from the first provincial papers of the day. They have been preserved by my wife; for though not insensible of the power of the press, I, myself, make it a point never to look into a newspaper.

Speaking of my wife—can you find a corner for her?

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A clever little chamber-maid—sings well and all that—and a faultless breeches figure. It is often difficult for a husband to speak of a wife's merits, but sometimes it must be done. The acting of MRS. WILKINS is wonderfully natural. She has it born in her what other actresses have to labour for. She has such impulse! The French actors have a better word for it—*abandon*, yes, *abandon* is the word. Well, sir, other actresses may obtain this from art; now MRS. WILKINS has it all by nature.

I have not spoken of salary, nor will I. On that point, sure am I, we shall be unanimous. All I want is London gas-light; for, indeed, I am tired of acting, as I have too long acted, under a bushel. In a word, sir, "I am a poor man who'd fain grow richer," and hoping to be—in your old and long-prized words—"one of your little set,"

I remain, yours, truly,

BULCAZEM WILKINS.

LETTER XX.

The Manager's Answer.

SIR,

It has been my misfortune to play with so many provincial *Catesbys*—a part, by the way, singularly neglected in all country theatres—that, at the date you name, it is almost impossible for me to have any recollection of your merits. I think, however, you were then the sucking actor who entirely marred my fifth act. I think WILKINS was the name. If you are, I am glad that you are improved; though I would rather have that fact certified by any other authority. If, however, you are the WILKINS I mean, you have at least this consolation—worse you cannot be. It is quite true that I have entered on the arduous task of management, and I cannot consent to make that task more irksome by adding to my difficulties, on the strength of a promise made I know not when—where—or to whom. I am afraid that frequent acts of civility

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when playing in the provinces have been sadly misinterpreted; for you are at least the twentieth applicant that has applied to me upon the encouragement of some vague compliment meant for nothing—nothing I assure you.

And now, sir, I will give you a small piece of valuable counsel. You are an actor (at least you say so;) well, never promise what you will do when you become a manager. Only praise an author's piece, and regret that you have no power to bring it out—(if you had, ha! how happy you should be!)—well, sir, you praise it, and think you have done with it. Why, in ten or fifteen years' time, you become a manager, and back comes the piece to you with your own commendatory letter, and the pest of an author claiming the fulfilment of your implied service. It might be difficult, but were my time to come over again, I should, in these matters, endeavour to speak the truth. Never say what you'll do when you become a manager. It is like a Prince of Wales promising what he'll do when he becomes king: flummery, sir—polite flummery.

With your great natural qualifications of figure, face, and voice, it would only distress me to see such fine advantages thrown away upon mere utility, could I even offer you that—and any thing beyond is entirely impossible. You are not a man for the team; no, but a racer that should start upon his own account. There is, no doubt, a plate for you somewhere, though not at my theatre.

Your list of parts is certainly very long. You seem to have played in every thing except one piece—*The Bashful Man.*

I have not read the criticisms you sent, but I at once detected the source of their eulogy—tobacco and gin and water. Such criticisms must be valuable, for they have every appearance of having cost you a great deal.

Your praise of MRS. WILKINS does honour to your feelings as a man and a husband; but the chamber-maids are filled.

Your obedient servant,

MAGNUS PUFF.

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LETTER XXI.

From a Poor Relation.

My Dear Cousin,

Although so many years have passed since we last met—nay, since we last corresponded—I feel that I should do much wrong to the goodness of your heart, to the truth and dignity of our early friendship, did I fail to write to you in my present strait. Did I listen to the sarcasms of the worldly and ungenerous, I should suffer in silence—but my soul revolts from their harsh, cold creed, that confounds prosperity with selfishness, and makes a golden barrier between kin and kin. I fear it may be too true that a profitable commerce with the world is apt to change some men—but there are others whose lustre of soul nothing can dim. Let them possess the diamonds of Golconda, and their minds would remain to them priceless and unchangeable.

Though there has been silence between us, it has often delighted me to learn in this obscure nook that you were still increasing in worldly goods and in the respect of all men. I have sent you no line, yet have I spiritually again and again congratulated you on the happiness that a wise enjoyment of wealth bestows—on the enviable power of doing good to all around you. For I remembered the candour and generosity of your soul, and knew that riches would be only acceptable to you as bestowing a power to assist your fellow-creatures; that you would consider gold, not as the familiar of avarice, but as the beneficent charm of a fairy, by which you might profit and delight your species.

There are foolish, gossipping folks, whose pleasure it seems to be to set friends against friends; people, whose happiness (at least it would almost appear so) is to find or make a flaw in the best of hearts. Had I listened to them, I should have believed that you were desirous of forgetting all your poorer kindred; that you looked upon your good fortune as giving you the best right to deny

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your own blood; that, in a word, being rich, you were no longer of the family—that you had, in fact, been altogether new made by PLUTUS, and had no relationship whatever with the ROBINSES. But how base, how wicked would it have been in me to believe in such a scandal!

"He has never written to any of you," these people would say—"depend upon it, he looks upon you all as a disgrace—as blots upon his finer fortune." But I knew too well that every moment of your time was occupied—that you had so many demands upon your hours that folks living in the quiet of the country have no thought of. "Again," I've said, "If cousin doesn't write to us, you must remember we never write to him." To this they've answered, "that was a different matter; for as you were the rich party, you ought to write first." A sort of argument, I must say, I never could see the reason of; for suppose you a thousand times richer than you are, what difference should that make? Lord bless us! as if your poor father and my dear mother—fond brother and sister as they were—would ever have thought about their children standing on any ceremony with one another!

You will, I know, be sorry to hear that I have had a great loss—for me, a very great one. The house of FLIMSY and STRAW stopped payment last week, and the consequence is, that I am at the present moment without a penny. Nevertheless, it isn't so bad as it seems; for they do say that the estate will pay some day ten shillings and odd in the pound. But the worst of it is, I am not able from this accident to meet two or three matters which are fast pressing upon me; and therefore in my difficulty must beg your assistance. I would not do so, were I not certain that it would even annoy you if I were to apply to any body else. I know your heart so well that you would never forgive me for hesitating. It would—I am sure you would feel it so—be an affront to you as a friend and a kinsman.

How delightful then is it, on a stroke of ill-fortune like the present, to know that we have a relative—a flourishing cordial soul—who looks upon himself as the steward of Providence; who is too happy to show his gratitude

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for prosperity, by shaking some few crumbs from his sumptuous, loaded board, to his poor relations: who acknowledges the solemn claims of blood, not alone with lip-acknowledgment, but with a sympathy that elevates "him that gives and him that takes."

I will by the next post send you all particulars.

Your affectionate Cousin,

EDWARD ROBINS.

LETTER XXII.

The Answer.

DEAR COUSIN,

You are quite right. Although so many years have gone by since you have written, you, nevertheless, only pay me my due, when you believe that I am by no means forgetful of my father's relations. As for the sarcasms and ill words of people, I have too much faith in my own motives to attend to them. You will always find idle—too often, disreputable—persons who make the high and the wealthy their licensed game. It is enough to be rich, to be abused by them. Philosophy, however, and my bank-book, have taught me to despise them. Not that I am a jot altered from the time when we were intimate; certainly not—nevertheless, the prejudices of the world require a certain dignity of appearance that the vulgar mistake for pride and ostentation.

I am pleased to find that, though we have not corresponded, you have, nevertheless, not forgotten me. I assure you, many a time, worried and oppressed by the toil of a commercial life, I have, in thought, visited your beautiful little house—(ha! my dear friend, if we only knew it, in such humility is true happiness!)—and have wished that I could change all the glitter and ceremony of life for the simple, yet substantial happiness of that homestead. You are quite right in believing that I consider wealth as only an agent for the ease and felicity of those about me—

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that is, if I really had the wealth with which the world, out of its ignorance or waywardness, is pleased to credit me.

Forget my poorer kindred! Impossible! No man, who, by the superiority of his talents and the energy of his character made an advance in the world, was ever yet permitted to forget them. *They* take good care of that. It is true, my dear friend, that you and I have not corresponded; but you little know, how frequently, and how very peculiarly, I have been made to remember the ROBINSES. As for being new-made by PLUTUS, I am sure they have believed in such a re-creation, for they have again and again addressed me as one lump of gold—again and again would have been happy to change me among them.

They who have maligned me by urging that I considered the poverty of my relations as a disgrace, know little of my true judgment. I have, it is true, been compelled to look upon it as a great misfortune, inasmuch, as I have too frequently felt its influence. Your allusion to my father and your mother touches me—takes me back again to the days of my youth—when I thought the world was all that we read of in fairy books. Ha! my dear cousin, that was, indeed, a time! Pity it is that so sweet a dream should give way to so hard and cold a reality.

Your news about FLIMSY and STRAW affects me deeply. I would have wished to keep the ill-tidings from you, but the truth is, I fear that I shall be seriously compromised by their failure. Very seriously, indeed. I have been engaged in a mining speculation, in which—but I will not distress you with what I fear may be the result. Not that I have to dread any thing fatal—certainly not; nevertheless, I fear—indeed, I am sure, that I shall be so driven into a corner that my heart will not be allowed to act as it could wish; and therefore—but you must take courage, my dear friend, and not suffer yourself to be dismayed by what may end in, comparatively, a trifle.

I know you think me rich—very rich. Well, I am not ungrateful. Notwithstanding, a man may be CRŒSUS himself, yet not have a shilling in his pocket. This may appear strange to you; but nevertheless, men with large

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floating capital—but you *must* understand—I haven't at this present moment a shilling that I can fairly lay my hands upon.

Otherwise, as a friend, as a relative, it would have given me the greatest pleasure to see you through this little difficulty. I am not insensible of family ties—I should hope not: but what are family ties with money at its present price in the market? Nevertheless, let your motto be, *Nil desperandum*, and believe me, yours truly,

JOSEPH GOODENOUGH.

LETTER XXIII.

From a Widower to a Widow, with an offer of Marriage.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Your kind looks and cordial words have accompanied me all the way home, and—the truth is, I write this before going to bed; I shall sleep the more soundly for having the matter off my mind. It is true, we have met but once; but we are both of us at that rational point of life, when people know the most value of time; and as all ceremony is but an idle waste of existence, I beg herewith to offer you my hand, and, with it, though I have been married before, an entire heart. There are hearts, madam, allow me to say, all the better for keeping; they become mellower, and more worth a woman's acceptance than the crude, unripe things, too frequently gathered—as children gather green fruit—to the discomfort of those who obtain them. I have been married to one wife, and know enough of the happiness of wedlock to wish it to be continued in another. The best compliment I can pay to the dear creature now in heaven, is to seek another dear creature here on earth. She was a woman of admirable judgment; and her portrait—it hangs over my chimney-piece—smiles down upon me as I write. She seems to know my thoughts, and to approve of them. I said, madam, she was a woman of excellent judgment.

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My means are tolerably good; more than sufficient for my widowed state. Of the truth of this, your solicitor shall have the most satisfactory proof. I have also heard —casually heard—that fortune has not, my dear madam, been blind to your deserts, and has awarded you more than enough to keep the wolf from the door. I rejoice at this; for whatever might be my disappointment, I would not entail upon you the inconvenience of marriage unaccompanied by an agreeable competence. What is enough for one—it has been said—is enough for two. But this is the ignorance of Cupid, who never could learn figures. Now Hymen—as you must know, dear madam—is a better arithmetician; taught as he is by butcher and baker. Love in a cottage is pretty enough for girls and boys; but men and women like a larger mansion, with coach-house and stabling.

You may urge against me, that I have incumbrances. By no means. My daughter having married a beggar, has ceased to have any natural claim upon me. If I am civil to her, it is solely from a certain weakness of heart that I cannot wholly conquer; and something too, moreover, to keep up appearances with a meddling world. I have told her that she is never to expect a farthing from me, and I should despise myself not to be a man of my word.

I have, too, a son; but when I tell you that I have once paid his debts, incurred in his wild minority, you will allow that, except my blessing, and, at times, my paternal advice, he can expect nothing more. I know the duties of a father, and will never satisfy the cravings of a profligate. Nevertheless, he is my own son; and whatever may be his need, my blessing and my counsel he shall never want.

My health, madam, has ever been excellent. I have worn like rock. I have heard of such things as nerves, but believe it my fate to have been born without any such weakness. I speak thus plainly of essentials, as you and I, madam, are now too wise to think consumption pretty —to tie ourselves to ill-health, believing it vastly interesting. I can ride forty miles a day, and take a hedge with any fellow of five-and-twenty. I say, I speak of these

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things, that you may know me as I am. Moreover, I assure you I eat with my own teeth, and grow my own hair. Besides this, I am only two-and-fifty.

What do you say, madam? As for vices, as I am an honest man, I do not think I can lay any to my charge. I may have my human weaknesses—such, indeed, as I have touched upon above; but, madam, it has ever been my study through life to be respectable. I have the handsomest pew in the church, and don't owe any man a shilling.

Well, my dear madam, it is getting late, and I must conclude. I hate to be out of bed after eleven—it is now past twelve. Hence, you must perceive how very much I am interested in this business. In another ten minutes I shall be asleep, and dreaming of you. May I wake to find my dream—for I know what it will be—a reality!

If our solicitors are mutually satisfied, will you name the day? I am superstitious about days—say, then, say Thursday week, and believe me your devoted lover, till death,

NICHOLAS BLACKTHORN.

P. S. May I see you to-morrow?

LETTER XXIV.

The Widow's Answer.

SIR,

Your favour of last night has, I own, surprised me. What! after one meeting, and that at a card-party, to make such an offer! Well, to be sure, you men are strange creatures! What, indeed, could you have seen in my conduct to think I could look over such boldness!

As for the rational point of life you speak of, I must confess I know not when that exactly occurs; do you think it—at least with women—at two-and-thirty? or if not, may I beg to know what age you consider me? Perhaps, though, my early and irreparable loss may have brought a look of premature age upon me. It is very possible—for what a man he was!

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As for what you say about hearts, sir, I know but little; I only know the one I have lost. If I did pluck it green, like the winter-apples in my store-room, it grew riper and riper in my care.

You say your wife's portrait smiled while you wrote. *His* dear miniature is now before me; I think I see the tears starting through the ivory as I look upon the precious features. If he ever could have frowned, surely he would frown now to think—but I will not pursue the theme.

As to your means, sir, I am happy to hear they are sufficient. Although I can by no possibility have an interest in them, nevertheless I myself too well know the blessings of competence not to congratulate you. True it is I know but little of the ways of money; but am blessed in my solicitors, MESSRS. GRIP and NIP, No. —, Furnival's-inn.

You speak of your incumbrances; my husband dying, left me without a single one. That your daughter should have forgotten her duty, is an affliction. I am glad, however, to find that you know the true source of consolation, and refuse to lend yourself to her improvidence. Truly, indeed, do you say it is a meddling world. *I* have found it so; as some of my lamented husband's poor relations will answer for me. However, as I could not endure the sight of any thing that reminded me of my dear lost treasure, I have left them for ever in Cornwall. It is now some months since they have ceased to distress me.

Your son may mend. If you will allow me as a stranger to speak, I think you should still act with tenderness towards him. How very little would pay his passage to Australia!

Health is, indeed, a treasure. *I* know it. Had I not had the robustness—pardon the word!—of a mountain-nymph, I had never survived the dreadful shock that cruel death has inflicted on me. As it was, it struck me down. But, as the poet says, "the bulrush rises when the oak goes crash."

You are partial to hunting? It is a noble recreation. My departed lamb followed the hounds, and, as sportsmen say, would ride at any thing. He once broke his collar-

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bone; but, with good nursing, we put him in the saddle again in a month. Ha! you should have seen him in his scarlet coat!

In this fleeting life, how small and vain are personal gifts compared to the treasures of the mind! Still, if there is any thing I admire, it is fine teeth. A wig, at least in a man, is detestable.

You say you are two-and-fifty. Well, I must say, you don't look *that* age.

You speak plainly of vices, and say you have none. It would be ill manners in me, on so short—I may say, so very trivial—an acquaintance, to doubt you. Besides, it has been my faith—and what I have lost by it I haven't time to tell—to think well of every body. Weaknesses we all have. One of mine is, a love of a pew. We think but very little of religion, when we forget proper hassocks.

I have, however, delayed you too long; and indeed, except for politeness' sake, know not why I should have written at all.

I therefore remain,

Your obedient servant,

RUTH DOUBLEKNOT.

P. S.—I shall be out all day to-morrow. At present—I say at present—I know of no engagement for the next day; no, not next day—the day after; for *I* hate a Thursday.

THE END.

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